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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 007300

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQI GOVERNING COUNCIL PRESIDENT TALABANI
DESCRIBES UPBEAT MEETINGS WITH TURKISH OFFICIALS; SAYS GOT
RECOGNIZED IGC, READY TO RECEIVE NEW IRAQI AMBASSADOR

REF: ANKARA 7253

Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch. Reasons 1.5 b and d.
Recommendations at Para 2.

Summary and Recommendations

¶1. (C) Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) President Jalal Talabani and his delegation to Turkey met Ambassador, DCM and A/PolMilCouns Nov. 21, providing a readout of their Nov. 19-20 meetings with Turkish officials and businessmen, including PM Erdogan, Acting FM/Trade Minister Tuzmen, MFA U/S Ziyal, TOBB Chairman Hisarciklioglu, and over 100 Turkish businessmen. Talabani said the visit had opened a new page in Turkey's relationship with the new Iraq. PM Erdogan was positive about future relations and said that all Iraqis were Turkey's brothers, according to Talabani. Talabani also said the GOT recognized the IGC, and was ready to have a new Iraqi Ambassador in Ankara, whom FM Zebari said would be named as soon as possible. On the PKK/KADEK, Talabani assured the Turks that the Iraqis were opposed to such foreign armed groups in Iraq and while the Iraqis themselves currently lacked the capability to eliminate them now, politically, the IGC would oppose them. He said the Turks offered to train police in Turkey and Iraq, adding, with reference to police training in Jordan, that Iraq should not put all of its police eggs in one basket. On Habur, Talabani suggested adding a bridge to the existing facilities at Habur to increase capacity, but the Turks rejected the idea, insisting on a second crossing point as the solution. Talabani said he had no objection, and FM Zebari said Iraq would welcome more border crossings with Turkey. Talabani said the Turks seemed unprepared for the amount of substance the Iraqi delegation came prepared to discuss, but were pleased by it and were now ready to engage the Iraqis on issues spanning the range of normal relations.

¶2. (C) Given Talabani's positions on the PKK and Habur, we recommend Washington and CPA work to get: a statement from the IGC clearly stating that the PKK/KADEK/KHK is a terrorist organization that has no future in Iraq, and urging its members to take advantage of the Turkish Reintegration Law before it expires on Feb. 6, 2004; and a three-way discussion in Ankara among Iraqi, CPA and Turkish officials on increasing the capacity for cross-border traffic immediately, including, but not limited to discussion of getting Habur to operate on a 24/7 basis, increasing Habur's capacity, and opening additional border crossings between Turkey and Iraq.
End summary and recommendations.

Turkey-Iraq Relations on Positive Track

¶3. (C) On November 21, ICG President Talabani, accompanied by IGC members Wael Abdullatif, Yonadam Kanna, Abdul Karim al-Muhammadawi, and Mowaffaq al-Ruba'ie, and Minister of Foreign affairs Hoshyar Zebari, Minister of Industry and Minerals Mohammad Tawfiq Rahim and PUK Ankara rep Bahros Galali met Ambassador, DCM and A/PolMilCouns to recap the Iraqis' Nov. 19-20 meetings with Turks. The Ambassador stressed the importance of developing the best possible Turkey-Iraq relationship. Talabani said he believed this visit had put the two countries on the right track, opening a new page in the relationship in a variety of areas. Talabani said he had explained to the Turks that Iraqi opposition to a Turkish troop deployment was not something aimed against Turkey, but part of an effort by Iraqis to take responsibility for their own security.

Iraqis Eager to Staff-up Embassy Ankara

14. (C) Talabani said that PM Erdogan had been very positive and stressed that all Iraqis were Turkey's brothers. Talabani said he expected the trade agreement (Reftel) with Trade Minister Tuzmen to be signed later that day (Nov. 21), and described the delegations meeting with U/S Ziyal and the MFA staff as mostly positive. In all these meetings, Talabani said he assured the Turks that the new Iraq would not be used by terrorists to attack Turkey. He also assured them that Iraq's territorial integrity would be preserved. When PM Erdogan noted that the new Iraqi constitution must be for all Iraqis, Talabani replied that under Saddam, many Iraqis were oppressed, but now the Shia could express themselves openly and the Assyrians and Turkmen could publicly assert their identities. The oppression was over. Talabani told Erdogan that while the constitution would reflect democratic respect for the majority, it would also capture a consensus on other main issues including the demands of Iraq's minorities. Talabani said that the Turks confirmed that they recognized the IGC, and said they were prepared to receive an Iraqi Ambassador in Ankara. Talabani, unaware that Turkey had an Ambassador in Baghdad, replied that Iraq was prepared to receive a Turkish Ambassador as well. FM Zebari noted that Iraq needed to enhance its diplomatic activities in Turkey and that he would speed up the selection process to get a strong ambassador appointed to Ankara as soon as possible. (Note: Zebari paid a visit to the Iraqi Embassy 11/20 and told us its small staff had been grateful for the contact with US Embassy and CPA officers in the run-up to A/S Dewey's Nov. 19 visit.)

15. (C) Zebari said that the Iraqi delegation's message that they wanted to reach out beyond the recent friction with Turkey was well understood and appreciated by the Turks. Turkey, he said, would have significant influence in Iraq based on good relations, trade and good will, not based on a military presence. Iraq, he continued, would be a major workshop for democracy in the years ahead, one in which Turkey would play a key role. Noting that none of Turkey's fears had proven accurate (the division of Iraq, waves of refugees, etc.) the Turks were still having trouble absorbing the fact that the old regime was gone for good and that the IGC, or at least some of its members, would be among the future leaders of Iraq with whom Turkey will need to work. Part of the Iraqi message, he said, was that Turkey needed to take a fresh look at the situation in Iraq. Zebari said that the PM seemed to have been well-advised, was supportive and took positively the Iraqi message. Zebari noted that the delegation had no meetings with military or TNIO representatives.

PKK/KADEK

16. (C) Turning to the PKK/KADEK, Talabani said he told the Turks that the IGC was against any foreign armed group in Iraq, that they did not want any terror attacks launched on Turkey from Iraq and that while the Iraqis themselves currently lacked the means to eliminate such groups, the IGC would do what it could politically to oppose them. When A/PolMilCouns asked Talabani privately whether he could make a statement specifically naming the PKK/KADEK/KHK a terrorist organization that had no future in Iraq, he said that would require an IGC decision, but was not out of the question.

Police Training and Diplomat Training

17. (C) Talabani said the Turks had offered to train Iraqi police in Diyarbakir and Iraq. When DCM mentioned the police training planned for Jordan, Talabani said that the need was so great that Iraq should take offers to train in Turkey and Egypt as well as Jordan, and not put all its eggs in one basket. He also noted that Iraq needed training for new diplomats, that the Turks had offered to provide such training, and that Iraq would appreciate an USG offer to train diplomats as well. (Turkish MFA Iraq Assistance Coordinator Ahmet Okcun called the Embassy 11/21 to confirm that Turkey would like to train Iraqi police in Diyarbakir and may send some trainers to Iraq, but would not/not participate in the Jordan program.)

Habur/Second Border Crossing

18. (C) Talabani said he had proposed to the Turks placing

another bridge at Habur to increase cross-border capacity there (a military bridge, he said, could be ready in seven days), but the Turks rejected the idea, stating that the answer for increased capacity was a second crossing point and increasing the use of the rail link via Syria. Talabani said he told the Turks the IGC had no objection to a second crossing, or even four or five of them, but those could not be ready as quickly as was needed. Zebari added that for the time being, bureaucratic delays, cumbersome military checks and several hours per day when Turks closed operations at Habur were causing the congestion. If the Turks wanted to open more crossings, he said, that would be welcomed. He added that the Iraqis told the Turks they welcomed enhanced trade, but that it had to be part of Iraq's broader trade policy and could not be isolated to bilateral arrangements.

¶ 9. (C) The Turks asked if the Iraqis could help arrange better security for Turkish truckers working in Iraq. Talabani said they would. The Turks also raised the issue of security for the Iraq-Turkey oil pipeline. Ambassador asked Talabani if there was a role BOTAS could play in securing the pipeline. Talabani replied that was up to the CPA. The CPA, he complained, had hired tribal chiefs with ties to Saddam to guard the pipeline, which was a key reason for continuing sabotage. He said and Zebari seconded that security for the pipeline should be provided by Iraqis from local areas who support the new Iraq. Talabani stated that there were Arabs who supported the IGC prepared to guard the pipeline between Kirkuk and Mosul. They should be used.

¶ 10. (C) Finally, Talabani noted that the Turks seemed unprepared for, but pleasantly surprised by the content and breadth of what the Iraqi delegation came prepared to discuss. Comment: We will seek a separate readout from the Turkish MFA today, but the impression Talabani and his delegation left with us was one of a serious and diverse group of Iraqi leaders who have established a solid platform for building a good relationship with Turkey.

¶ 11. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
EDELMAN